



East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate remained constant over the month at 2.3 percent and was seven-tenths of a percentage point below March 2006 in the Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area as shown in East Central Idaho Table 1. It is the lowest rate since August 2006. In August 2005, the rate dropped below 3 percent and has pretty much stayed there since. Besides construction showing a large increase in jobs in March with relatively dry, temperate weather, retail jobs were notably higher. Kohl's hired and started training employees in preparation for the early April opening of its new store. Year-over-year, part of the construction increase — 40 jobs — was the result of the reclassification of jobs from the natural resources sector. Professional services posted a decline of almost 4,000 when those jobs at the Idaho National Laboratory were properly reported as being in Butte County rather than Bonneville County even though most of those workers live in the Idaho Falls area. Nonfarm payroll jobs are counted where the job is located, not where the worker lives.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FINDING HIDDEN EMPLOYEES AND KEEPING CURRENT ONES

As more and more employers battle for employees in a tight labor market, they want to know where the hidden workers are. They might be comforted to know those workers are all around but it may take coaxing to get them back into the workplace. Among them are . . .

- Students/Youth
- Hispanics – a fast growing minority
- Older workers
- Disabled or handicapped people

Students/Youth

Many employers don't realize that students and youth can be hired at age 14 and 15. Pamphlets on youth labor laws are available at Idaho Commerce & Labor offices. Many youth this age want

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

| | Mar 2007* | Feb 2007 | Mar 2006 | % Change From | |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | Last Month | Last Year |
| INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE | | | | | |
| <i>Seasonally Adjusted</i> | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 58,820 | 58,050 | 58,160 | 1.3 | 1.1 |
| Unemployment | 1,370 | 1,350 | 1,770 | 1.5 | -22.6 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 2.3% | 2.3% | 3.0% | | |
| Total Employment | 57,450 | 56,690 | 56,380 | 1.3 | 1.9 |
| <i>Unadjusted</i> | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 57,450 | 56,900 | 56,990 | 1.0 | 0.8 |
| Unemployment | 1,690 | 1,820 | 2,060 | -7.1 | -18.0 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 2.9% | 3.2% | 3.6% | | |
| Total Employment | 55,760 | 55,090 | 54,930 | 1.2 | 1.5 |
| JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK | | | | | |
| Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS | 50,400 | 49,880 | 53,490 | 1.0 | -5.8 |
| <i>Goods-Producing Industries</i> | 7,710 | 7,500 | 7,270 | 2.8 | 6.1 |
| Natural Resources & Mining | 10 | 10 | 50 | 0.0 | -80.0 |
| Construction | 4,260 | 4,060 | 3,890 | 4.9 | 9.5 |
| Manufacturing | 3,440 | 3,430 | 3,330 | 0.3 | 3.3 |
| Food Manufacturing | 1,090 | 1,090 | 1,030 | 0.0 | 5.8 |
| Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing | 240 | 240 | 240 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Machinery Manufacturing | 150 | 150 | 160 | 0.0 | -6.3 |
| Other Manufacturing | 1,960 | 1,950 | 1,900 | 0.5 | 3.2 |
| <i>Service-Providing Industries</i> | 42,690 | 42,380 | 46,220 | 0.7 | -7.6 |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 13,530 | 13,326 | 13,470 | 1.5 | 0.4 |
| Wholesale Trade | 4,030 | 3,957 | 4,180 | 1.8 | -3.6 |
| Retail Trade | 7,710 | 7,593 | 7,650 | 1.5 | 0.8 |
| Utilities | 60 | 57 | 50 | 5.3 | 20.0 |
| Transportation | 1,730 | 1,719 | 1,590 | 0.6 | 8.8 |
| Information | 1,240 | 1,230 | 1,180 | 0.8 | 5.1 |
| Financial Activities | 2,220 | 2,216 | 2,140 | 0.2 | 3.7 |
| Professional & Business Services | 5,510 | 5,501 | 9,480 | 0.2 | -41.9 |
| Educational & Health Services | 6,950 | 6,915 | 6,790 | 0.5 | 2.4 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 4,360 | 4,354 | 4,420 | 0.1 | -1.4 |
| Other Services | 1,910 | 1,911 | 2,040 | -0.1 | -6.4 |
| Government Education | 3,730 | 3,738 | 3,470 | -0.2 | 7.5 |
| Government Administration | 3,240 | 3,193 | 3,230 | 1.5 | 0.3 |

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

to work, but fear of unknown labor laws discourages many employers from hiring them. By hiring these young people, employers help these workers become familiar with their options at a much younger age, and that helps them prepare for careers by developing responsibility and knowing their potential. Hiring at 16 and 17 only requires employers to watch the type of work these young people are given. Dangerous or potentially hazardous jobs are prohibited. Again, many of them want to work but can only find jobs by word of mouth from other friends who

happen to know a company that hires young people. In a tight labor market, finding the talents and potential of youth will help alleviate some of the pressure a company may be experiencing by overworking its current employees. It will also keep many of the youth from exploring things that might not be in their best interest or the best interest of the community.

Hispanics

The Hispanic population is also overlooked. If language is a barrier, an employer can encourage their workers to take English as a Second Language classes at places like Eastern Idaho Technical College that will help them improve their English and discover hidden talents and skills. Many Hispanic youngsters do not have a problem with the English language and most are bilingual, having interpreted for their parents from very early ages.

Disabled and Handicapped

The disabled and handicapped are very available and capable of many jobs. While some have job coaches to help them, others can work on their own. Contact can be made through the Development Workshop in Idaho Falls and other organizations.

Older Workers

Many times older workers either cannot afford to or do not want to retire but may not want to work full time. Job sharing might be one option, even overlapping a few hours for new employees to glean from experienced workers while older workers learn new technology from young employees. There are older worker programs in the community to help those looking for work make contacts. Most of these organizations have representatives who are available at the Idaho Commerce & Labor local offices each week to meet with clients and others.

Another aspect of a tight labor market is making sure employers don't lose their best or developing employees. According to Mike Hill, supervisor of the Idaho Falls Commerce & Labor office, an employer can benefit from a few simple tips, listed below..

| Tips for the Work Place | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Do: | Don't: |
| Pay Fair | Micromanage |
| Reward Often | Assume |
| Develop Employees | Demean |
| Become a Team | Rush |
| Correctly Place Employees | Overwork |
| Invest in Employees' Health | Generalize |
| Help Employees Succeed | Shift the Blame |
| Get to Know Employees | Make Idle Threats |
| Have Fun, Listen, Follow Through | |

By investing in employees, employers will reduce training, maximize wages and lessen the learning curve. Em-

ployers will also find that wages are very attractive, but a fun and healthy working environment will keep employees and add to their job satisfaction. Positive word of mouth can help tremendously with a company's marketing strategy.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- Eagle View Plaza is the newest construction at Taylor Crossing on the River in Idaho Falls. It faces the roundabout from the northwest and has a great view of the sculptured eagles and mountain lion in the beautiful fountain. It is the largest building in the professional development at 75,000 square feet with a three-story atrium. The building is to open in spring 2008 and will have a restaurant and possible medical spa. Edge Wireless opened its call center in the Michael W. McNeil building at Taylor Crossing with 40 employees. This is an expansion of the Bend, Ore., facility where representatives assist customers with billing, technical support and other inquiries.
- Rocknak's Hardware Plus opened a new store in the Idaho Falls area. The 10,000-square-foot store is an addition to the one on the west side of Idaho Falls. The new store was a result of closing a Wyoming store and needing a place for the extra inventory in a location that would still be profitable.

MADISON COUNTY

- Miller's Hideaway recently closed its doors at the south Rexburg exit. It was the only bar in the community. Although alcohol permits have been an issue in Rexburg for some time, places such as Applebee's have been able to work around the fact that they are not issued to find a way to start building in the area. Pressure from locals and declining sales were noted as reasons for the closure. The land and building have been sold to Las Vegas speculators and the building will be razed.
- Madison Memorial Hospital of Rexburg opened its \$55 million expansion of its Mother Baby Unit in April. The addition has spacious rooms, wood furnishings, large windows, daddy sleepers and Jacuzzi access. The private rooms give new mothers more comfort and privacy and allow space for visitors. There are still other expansions under way, but this unit was a priority with all the new residents. The hospital also hopes to open a newborn intensive care unit in about a year.

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